

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

soul with its own beauty, because it transforms the beloved and makes her one with the lover.¹ "Love harmonizes the three powers of our soul, and binds them together. The will moves the understanding to see, when it wishes to love; when the understanding perceives that the will would fain love, if it is a rational will, it places before it as object the ineffable love of the eternal Father, who has given us the Word, His own Son, and the obedience and humility of the Son, who endured torments, injuries, mockeries, and insults with meekness and with such great love. And thus the will, with ineffable love, follows what the eye of the understanding has beheld; and, with its strong hand, it stores up in the memory the treasure that it draws from this love."²

Then, since the supreme act of Divine Love is seen in the Sacrifice of Calvary, and again in the mystical outpouring of Pentecost, Love's symbols for Catherine are blood and fire—but, above all, blood, and sometimes this finds startling expression.

She calls her letters written in blood. Those to whom they are addressed are bidden drink blood, clothe themselves in blood, be transformed and set on fire with blood ; they are inebriated with blood ; their will, their understanding, and their memory are filled with blood; they are drowned beneath the tide of blood.

" Drown yourself in the blood of Christ crucified," she writes to Fra Raimondo, " and bathe yourself in the blood ; inebriate

yourself with the blood, satiate yourself with the blood, and clothe yourself with the blood. If you have been unfaithful,

baptise yourself again in the blood; if the demon has darkened

the eye of your understanding, wash it with the blood; if you

have fallen into ingratitude for gifts which you have not acknowledged, be grateful in the blood ; if you have been

an unworthy
pastor, and without the rod of justice tempered with
prudence
and mercy, draw it from the blood ; with the eye of
understand
ing, see it in the blood, and take it with the hand of
love, and
grasp it with panting desire. Dissolve your tepidity
in the heat
of the blood, and cast off your darkness in the light
of the blood,

¹ Letter 108 (172).

^a Letter 95 (308).